

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 1997

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MX

SUBJECT: MILITARY DECORATION

1. IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT ONE OF MY FORMER U.S. NAVAL ATTACHES TO MEXICO, CAPT PEHR H. PEHRSSON WAS ADVISED INFORMALLY THAT A DECORATION PRESENTED TO HIM BY THE MEXICAN SECRETARY OF MARINE AFFAIRS HAS BEEN DISAPPROVED BY THE U.S. NAVY. THE REPORTED REASON FOR REFUSAL OF THE AWARD WAS CAPT PEHRSSON'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN MEXICO. IT IS CORRECT THAT SINCE THERE IS NO MILITARY ADVISORY GROUP THE DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE DATT HAS THE SAP RESPONSIBILITY IN MEXICO. CAPT PEHRSSON'S DUTIES IN NO WAY COULD OR SHOULD CONSTITUTE A BAR TO HIS RECEIVING A RICHLY DESERVED AND VERY UNIQUE FOREIGN DECORATION; UNIQUE IN THE SENSE THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE IT IS THE FIRST SUCH AWARD IN THE HISTORY OF U.S. NAVY/MEXICAN NAVY RELATIONS.

2. INsofar AS THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN MEXICO IS CONCERNED IT IS CERTAINLY AN EXTREMELY MEAGER ONE, INVOLVING ONLY TRAINING, WITH FOREIGN MILITARY SALES TRANSACTIONS HANDLED TOTALLY AND DIRECTLY IN DEALINGS BETWEEN THE MEXICAN MILITARY AND

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NAVAL ATTACHES IN WASH AND THE U.S. MILITARY OR NAVAL SERVICE OR

SERVICES FROM WHOM A PURCHASE MIGHT BE DESIRED. APPARENTLY THIS HAS NOT BEEN A BAR TO GOM AWARDS TO FORMER DEFENSE ATTACHES IN MEXICO. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, ALL HAVE RECEIVED EQUIVALENT DECORATIONS FROM THE MEXICAN SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE.

3. IT IS MY OPINION THAT THE REFUSAL OF THIS AWARD IS NOT ONLY AGAINST THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES, BUT IN FACT WOULD CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS AFFRONT TO THE SENSITIVITIES OF A VERY PROUD MEXICAN NAVY. I MIGHT ADD THAT THIS COMES AT A TIME WHEN MUCH IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND MEXICAN NAVIES, PARTIALLY A RESULT OF CAPT PEHRSSON'S EFFORTS, ARE SO WELCOME. I FEAR THAT THE MONTHS AHEAD, WITH ANNOUNCEMENT ON 6 FEB OF NEW SEA LIMITATIONS, WILL SORELY TRY THESE GOOD RELATIONS. (PLEASE NOTE THAT DESPITE MY REQUEST THERE HAVE BEEN NO U.S. NAVAL SHIP VISITS TO MEXICO IN SEVERAL YEARS.)

4. APART FROM THE FACT THAT CAPT PEHRSSON IS NOW IN RETIREMENT AND THAT HIS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF DUTY SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED NOT ONLY BY HIS OWN SERVICE BUT BY A MAJOR FOREIGN GOVERNMENT, REFUSAL OF THIS DECORATION BY THE U.S. NAVY COULD CAUSE SERIOUS DAMAGE TO FUTURE MISSION PERFORMANCE BY THE CURRENTLY ASSIGNED NAVAL ATTACHES. I FEEL THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD SEEK INFORMATION ON THIS REPORTED ACTION BY THE NAVY DEPARTMENT AND SHOULD ATTEMPT TO REVERSE THE DECISION IN FAVOR OF PERMITTING CAPT PEHRSSON TO ACCEPT THE DECORATION. SHOULD THE U.S. NAVY PERSIST IN ITS DECISION CONCERNING THE PERSONAL STATUS OF CAPT PEHRSSON, IN NO CASE SHOULD THE DECORATION BE RETURNED TO THE GOM.  
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